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CONSTRUCTIVE STUDIES IN THE PROPHETIC ELEMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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III. PROPHECY AND PROPHETISM DURING THE PERIOD OF THE PATRIARCHS AND JUDGES.

§ 25. **The Scope of This Period** is practically that of Israel's *beginnings*, commencing with Abraham and closing about the time of Samuel's birth. It includes therefore (1) the early nomadic life in Palestine, (2) the descent into Egypt, (3) the exodus from Egypt, (4) the residence in the wilderness, (5) the conquest of Canaan, (6) the settlement in Canaan—a period of more than one thousand years.

§ 26. **The Character of the Period** may not easily be indicated. The earlier portion could be only what a nomadic life made possible. It was certainly not a period furnishing prophetic thought or prophetic movement. It might be called *ante*-prophetic, because it preceded, and prepared the way for, the earliest phase of prophetic development which started with Samuel. The religious spirit was crude and primitive, although very intense. It was this spirit, however, that furnished the basis on which prophecy was to develop. It was, above all, the period in which the older Semitic religion came into contact with the Baalism of the Canaanites, in which Israel "assimilated the mass of the Canaanites with their thought and their principles" (Davidson). Israel's religion was long weighted down with the foreign elements thus absorbed; but when once these new elements had been overcome and brought into control, the result was something which proved to be broader and warmer; something which could not have existed but for this commingling.

§ 27. **The Contemporaneous Literary Sources** of this period are few. Those that exist are hardly to be called prophetic. The determination of these sources is attended with much difficulty (*cf.* § 3). Entire agreement has not yet been reached. The following pieces, in whole or in part, may, however, be regarded as the literary product of this period:

1. The Song of Lamech, in which the primitive war-like spirit of the early Semites finds expression. Gen. 4: 23, 24.
2. The blessing of Noah, in which the hostility of the Hebrews toward the Canaanites in post-Egyptian times is the dominant note. Gen. 9: 25-27.
3. Portions of the blessing of Jacob, a reflection of the conditions and relations of the tribes in the days of the early occupation of Canaan. Gen., chap. 49.
4. The Song of the Exodus, in which the triumph of Jehovah over the Egyptians is celebrated. Exod. 15: 1-19.
5. The original words of the decalogue, in which ethical and religious laws for the newly organized nation are formulated. Exod. 20: 1-17.
6. Some portions of the Book of the Covenant, containing the laws required for the conduct of social and religious life in the newly acquired land of Canaan. Exod., chaps. 21-23.
7. Notes of the itinerary from which the later accounts were developed. Numb., chaps. 10-25 and 33.
8. Songs of the desert, arising out of the conditions of nomadic life. Numb. 21: 14 f., 17 f.
9. Portions of Balaam's addresses, which grew out of the strife between Israel and Moab in the days of conquest and settlement. Numb., chaps 23, 24.
10. Portions of the Song of Moses, which express the ideals and hopes of the later days of this period. Deut., chap. 33.
11. The Song of Deborah, a triumphal ode upon Israel's overthrow of the Canaanites under Sisera. Judg., chap. 5.
12. Jotham's fable, an illustration of the disturbed political conditions in early Israel. Judg. 9: 7-15.

It is to be noted that the present literary form of some of this material—*e. g.*, the decalogue, the blessing of Jacob—is from a date later even than 900-800 B. C.

§ 28. **Constructive Work.**—In the case of each of the twelve pieces cited under § 27, consider the following suggestions:

1. Ascertain the particular century to which the piece is now commonly assigned, together with the grounds on which its assignment to this period rests.
2. Separate carefully those portions of the piece which may fairly be regarded as having their origin later than 1050 B. C., indicating the reasons for this separation.

3. Describe the historical background of the piece in as close detail as possible.
4. Indicate succinctly the content of the piece—what, as a matter of fact, is said in it.
5. Try to connect the content with the historical setting, and to discover the underlying purpose of the piece.
6. Formulate the principal teachings, the most vital thought, which the piece contains.

§ 29. **Later Literary Sources** of information relating to this period and throwing light upon (1) the institutions, (2) the important lives and events, and (3) the utterances of the principal characters, are to be found in certain documents or books, the date of which falls a considerable time after the events themselves. This material, ordinarily called tradition, represents more accurately the point of view of the later age in which it took its present literary form, than that of the age which it describes. The following are the principal pieces falling under this head:

Numb. 21: 14;
Jos. 10: 12, 13;
2 Sam. 1: 17-27.

E. g., Judg. 6: 1-10;
10: 6-16;
chaps. 17 and 18;
21: 1-14;
2: 6-3: 6.

E. g., Gen. 20: 1-17;
21: 8-22: 13;
31: 2-16, 19-24,
32-42, 51-32: 2;
35: 1-4, 66-8;
37: 5-36 (in the main);
40: 1-41: 40;
42: 8-37; Exod. 1: 15-2: 10;
17: 16-18: 27;
20: 1-24: 8;
Deut., chap. 33.

1. Books (now lost) of the *Wars of Jehovah* and of *Jashar*, probably collections of songs celebrating Israel's victories from the time of Moses onward.

2. The book of Judges, a compilation of stories concerning the conquest of Canaan, and of heroic deeds against Canaanites and other foes of Israel in the premonarchical period. These stories were first reduced to writing about the ninth century B. C., and this primitive work underwent thorough revision at the hands of successive editors until the book assumed its present form. The result is a narrative presenting the early history in Canaan from the Deuteronomic standpoint.

3. E, one of the constituent documents of the Hexateuch, taking its name from its use of the word *Elohim* in speaking of God, compiled probably in northern Israel, and narrating the ancient traditions and early history of Israel from the point of view of a northern prophet, living not later than 850 B. C.

4. J, another constituent source of the Hexateuch, deriving its name from its use of the name *Jehovah* in speaking of God, compiled in Judah, and narrating the ancient traditions and early history of Israel from the point of view of a southern prophet, living not later than 750 B. C.

E. g., Gen. 2:4b—4:26; 6:1-8; 9:18-27; 11:1-9; 12:1-4a, 6-20; 18:1-19:28, 30-38; 24:1-67; Exod. 34:1-28.

5. D, a third Hexateuchal source, containing the greater part of the book of Deuteronomy and other materials, especially in the book of Joshua, characterized by the same style and spirit, being chiefly a revision of the earlier legislation and a narrative of the events connected with the promulgation of the Mosaic law. This is probably the book that was found in the reign of King Josiah (621 B. C.).

Especially, Deut., chaps. 1-11.

6. P, a fourth Hexateuchal source, being a narrative of Israel's history beginning with creation itself, compiled by men controlled by the *priestly* spirit and representing the point of view of the post-exilic Jews; in its latest form, not earlier than the days of Ezra, 440 B. C.

E. g., Gen. 1:1—2:4a; 5:1-28; 6:9-22; 9:1-17; 11:10-27; 17:1-27; 28:1-9; 36:1-30; Exod., 6:2-7:13; 12:1-20; 34:29—40:38; Book of Leviticus; Numb. 1:1-10:28; 15:1-41.

§ 30. **In the Interpretation of These Later Sources** it will often be found difficult to distinguish between the thought of the writer's time and that of the times of the event. In general, three schools of interpretation exist:

1. The school which maintains that the material of these documents is, for the most part, contemporaneous with the events described or words uttered; and that, in any case, by direct divine interposition, the narratives have been rendered absolutely accurate in every particular, and consequently are to be understood literally, the words, for example, placed in the mouths of Abraham, or Jacob, or Moses, being the exact words used.

2. The school which maintains that this material has no historical value, since it is largely, if not wholly, the creation of the later author, the representations made by him belonging to his own time rather than to the times which he describes.

3. The school which concedes the later date of the literary authorship of the books in their present form; but insists that these authors made use of earlier writings, some of them very old, and that, consequently, some, at least, of the essential substance, belongs to the age of the events. The point of view of this, the third school, is taken in these studies. It is frankly conceded that the adoption of this posi-

tion often leaves one in great uncertainty, for the reason that in many cases sufficient data do not exist to serve as a basis for sharply distinguishing the writer's point of view from that of the times of which he is giving the history.

§ 31. **Constructive Work.**—It is important to make use of these later traditions, and to this end it is suggested that, in the case of each of these collections or documents, indicated in § 29, the student—

1. Secure from some authority (see below) the actual Scripture material which scholars are accustomed to regard as included in it.
2. Consider the various points which are thought to be characteristic of it.
3. Study closely the times in which it is claimed to have had its origin, and the important ideas of those times.
4. Note the "traditions" given concerning these early times which form the basis of this study, and distinguish the sympathies and antipathies which have been transferred from the later period.
5. Sum up briefly the essential events and ideas which, after due allowance has been made for such transference, may fairly be regarded as belonging to the period described.

See especially DRIVER, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 116-72; CARPENTER AND HARFORD-BATTERSBY, *The Hexateuch*, Vol. I, pp. 92-156, and Vol. II; MITCHELL, *The World before Abraham*, pp. 16-67; B. W. BACON, *The Genesis of Genesis* (1893); IDEM, *The Triple Tradition of the Exodus* (1894); ADDIS, *The Documents of the Hexateuch*, Vol. I (1893), Vol. II (1898); articles "Hexateuch," in HASTINGS'S *Dictionary of the Bible* and *Encyclopædia Biblica*; GUNKEL, *The Legends of Genesis*; and the commentaries by DRIVER, MOORE, and H. P. SMITH on Deuteronomy, Judges, and Samuel (*International Critical Commentary*).

§ 32. **Monumental Sources** throwing light upon the times of this period include, among other material:

1. The Hammurabi code of laws, dating from about 2250 B. C., and revealing fully the advanced stage of civilization already attained by the Babylonians.
2. Babylonian contract tablets from the time of Abraham, showing that persons bearing Hebrew names were then in Babylonia, that there was much intercourse between Babylonia and the West, and that Babylonian civilization was already highly developed.
3. The Tell-el-Amarna letters, dating from the fifteenth century B. C., and showing the extent of Babylonian influence in Canaan and the disturbed political condition there at that time.
4. The popular Egyptian story entitled "The Tale of Two

Brothers," which originated about the thirteenth century B. C., and affords a parallel to the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife.

5. The Stele of Menepthah II., mentioning the Israelites and illustrating Egyptian activities in Canaan about the time of the exodus.

6. The lists of the Egyptian kings, Thothmes III. (1503-1449 B. C.), Seti, Ramses II. (1275-1208 B. C.), and Ramses III., furnishing evidence of Egyptian activities in Palestine.

7. The Egyptian narrative entitled "The Travels of a Mohar," coming from the reign of Ramses II. and being an imaginative recital of a trip through Palestine.

8. The legend concerning the birth and boyhood of Sargon I., king of Agade, a story furnishing some parallels to the narrative of the birth of Moses.

9. Historical inscriptions of Nebuchadrezzar I., king of Babylon (about 1140 B. C.), and Tiglath-pileser I., king of Assyria (about 1100 B. C.), yielding much information concerning the power and influence of Babylonia and Assyria in the twelfth century B. C.

§ 33. **Constructive Work.**—Prepare a brief statement in relation to each of these pieces, presenting the essential points of interest from the point of view of Israel's history and thought in this early period. For these materials in general and their value see the literature cited in § 2, and especially the following :

S. R. DRIVER, "Hebrew Authority," in HOGARTH'S *Authority and Archaeology*, pp. 35-79; C. J. BALL, *Light from the East*, pp. 62-133; SAYCE, *Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments* (1894); IDEM, *Patriarchal Palestine*; HOMMEL, *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition as Illustrated by the Monuments* (1897); W. MAX MÜLLER, *Asien und Europa nach altaegyptischen Denkmälern* (1893); L. B. PATON, *Early History of Syria and Palestine* (1901); SCHRADER, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (3d ed. 1902); T. G. PINCHES, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia* (1902).

On (1) see R. F. HARPER, *The Code of Hammurabi, King of Babylonia* (1904); L. W. KING, *The Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi* (1898); S. A. COOK, *The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi* (1903); W. HAYES WARD, "Who Was Hammurabi?" *Century*, July, 1903; C. F. KENT, "The Recently Discovered Civil Code of Hammurabi," *BIBLICAL WORLD*, Vol. XXI (1903), pp. 175-90; C. H. W. JOHNS, "Notes on the Code of Hammurabi," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. XIX (1903), pp. 96-107; IDEM, *The Oldest Code of Laws in the World: The Code of Laws Promulgated by Hammurabi, King of Babylon, B. C. 2285-2242* (1903); T. G. PINCHES, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, November 1902; W. HAYES WARD, "The Code of Hammurabi, King of Babylon (about 2250 B. C.)," *Independent*, 1903, pp. 67-70, 127-32, 183-90; V. SCHEIL, *Mémoires de la délégation en Perse*, Tome IV (1902); H. WINCKLER, *Die Gesetze Hammurabis* (1903); D. H. MÜLLER, *Die Gesetze Hammurabis und ihr Verhältnis*

zur Mosaischen Gesetzgebung sowie zu den XII Tafeln (1903); KOHLER UND PEISER, *Hammurabi's Gesetz*; Band I, *Uebersetzung, Juristische Wiedergabe, Erläuterung* (1903); GRIMME, *Das Gesetz Chamurabis und Moses* (1903); OETTLI, *Das Gesetz Hammurabis und die Thora Israels* (1903); J. JEREMIAS, *Moses und Hammurabi* (1903).

On (2) see R. F. HARPER, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature—Selected Translations* (1901), pp. 256–72.

On (3) see BEZOLD, *Oriental Diplomacy* (1892); BUDGE AND BEZOLD, *The Tell-el-Amarna Tablets* (1892); WINCKLER, *The Tell-el-Amarna Letters* (1896); PETRIE, *Syria and Egypt from the Tell-el-Amarna Letters* (1898); NIEBUHR, *Die Amarna-Zeit* (1899); R. F. HARPER, *op. cit.*, pp. 217–41.

On (4) see PETRIE, *Egyptian Tales*, Vol. II (1895), pp. 36 ff.; *Records of the Past* (1st series), Vol. II, pp. 137–52; MASPERO, *Contes populaires égyptiennes*.

On (5) see J. H. BREASTED, *BIBLICAL WORLD*, Vol. IX (1897), pp. 62–68; SPIEGELBERG, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, Vol. XXXIV (1896), pp. 1–25; HOMMEL, *Expository Times*, October, 1896; PETRIE, *Contemporary Review*, May, 1896; SAYCE, *Academy*, July, 1896.

On (6) see *Records of the Past* (new series), Vol. VI, pp. 24 ff., 31 ff.; W. MAX MÜLLER, *Asien und Europa* (1893), pp. 159, 164 ff., 227 ff., 393; SAYCE, *Patriarchal Palestine*, pp. 235–40.

On (7) see SAYCE, *Patriarchal Palestine* (1895), pp. 204–24; *Records of the Past* (1st series), Vol. II, pp. 107–16.

On (8) see R. F. HARPER, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature—Selected Translations* (1901), p. 1.

On (9) see R. F. HARPER, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–27; W. LOTZ, *Die Inschriften Tiglath-pileser's*, I (1880); EB. SCHRADER, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, Vol. I (1889), pp. 14–49.

§ 34. **Constructive Work.**—On the basis of the foregoing monumental material consider in general (1) the relations of Israel with other nations; (2) the various changes in Israel's geographical, historical, and social environment during this early period; (3) the help received for a better understanding of Israel's life and religion.

§ 35. **Study the Institutions** expressive of religious thought as they existed in this period, in general (see *Constructive Studies in the Priestly Element in the Old Testament* [1902], §§ 15, 16), and in particular, viz.:

1. The Priest, §§ 59–61.
2. The Place of Worship, §§ 73, 74.
3. Sacrifice, §§ 83, 84.
4. Feasts, §§ 96, 97.
5. The Sabbath, §§ 108, 109.
6. The Clean and Unclean, §§ 122, 123.
7. Prayer, § 137, 1.
8. The Vow, § 140, 1.
9. Blessings and Cursings, § 143, 1.

10. The Ban, § 146, 1.
11. The Oath, § 149, 1.
12. The Fast, § 152, 1.
13. Consultation with the Deity through Oracles, Urim and Thummim, the Ephod, the Lot, § 155, 1.
14. Consultation with the Deity through Magic, Divination, Sorcery, Witchcraft, § 158, 1.
15. Mourning Customs, § 161, 1.
16. Circumcision, § 164, 1.

§ 36. **Constructive Study on the Religious Sentiment of the Times.**—Upon the basis of the material thus collected formulate a general statement which will characterize the religious sentiment of the times in respect to—

1. Its purity from superstition.
2. Its stage of advancement.
3. Its simplicity or complexity.
4. Its adaptation to nomadic life.
5. Its adaptation to agricultural life.
6. The presence of elements approved or disapproved in later times by the prophets.
7. The presence of elements common to other Semitic religions.
8. The presence of elements peculiar to the Hebrew religion.
9. The relative importance of the religious and the moral elements.

§ 37. **Survey Rapidly the Great Characters and Events** of this period, with a view to ascertaining, in the case of each, the peculiar religious significance which it must have suggested to the people of the earliest times, *e. g.* :

1. The life of Abraham, with its lessons of joyful communion between Jehovah and his people. **Gen. 12:1—25:11.**
2. The characters of Isaac and Jacob, suggestive of the low standards of religion and morality prevalent in patriarchal times, and of the strife between Israel and the neighboring tribes. **Gen. 25:19—50:3.**
3. The career of Joseph, teaching Jehovah's preserving care of his people and the triumph of true virtue. **Gen. 37:1—50:26.**
4. The residence in Egypt, welding the captive tribes into a unit through common suffering, and bringing them into contact with the advanced civilization and religion of Egypt. **Exod., chaps. 1; 2.**

- Exod.**, chaps. 5-15. 5. The exodus from Egypt, furnishing convincing evidence of Jehovah's care of Israel and his power to deliver them from the mightiest foes.
- Exod.**, chaps. 16-19; **Numb.**, chaps. 10-33. 6. The residence in the wilderness, necessitating a simple, abstemious manner of life, and emphasizing the nation's absolute dependence upon Jehovah's favor.
- E. g.*, **Exod.**, chaps. 3; 4; 20; **Numb.**, *passim*. 7. The work of Moses in organizing the tribes into a nation, giving them a new conception of Jehovah, and laying the foundations of their religion.
- Joshua and Judges**, *passim*. 8. The lessons of the conquest, which made evident the necessity of hearty co-operation among the tribes, and showed the superiority of Jehovah to the gods of Canaan.
- E. g.*, **Judg.**, chaps. 8; 11; 12. 9. The anarchy in the times of the Judges, when the nation was in danger of disintegration and was held together only by the common worship of Jehovah.
10. The significance of the settlement in Canaan.
- In this work, the greatest effort must be made to reconstruct the picture of the times of the event, in distinction from those in which the narrative, in each case, was written. The question is: What was the significance of Abraham, or Moses, or the exodus, or the conquest to the people of these early times? We do not, at this point care what the later generations thought. What special impression did these great lives and these wonderful events make on the people of the times of which they were a part?

§ 38. **Constructive Study.**—Consider now the religious progress indicated by these lives and events, and formulate the same in a series of propositions under the following heads:

1. Faith in the power of Jehovah to deliver.
2. The consequences of sin.
3. The reward of righteousness.
4. The nation's conception of its own future.
5. Israel's attitude toward other tribes and nations.
6. The existence of other gods than Jehovah.
7. The relation of Jehovah to Israel.
8. The nation's conception of Jehovah.

§ 39. **Constructive Work on the Prophet and Prophetic Work.**—Study the more important instances in which

reference is made to the prophet, or his work, viz.:
 Abraham is called a prophet; Moses is represented as Gen. 20: 7 (E).
 calling himself a prophet; the song of "Miriam, the prophetess," upon the overthrow of Pharaoh's army; the Deut. 18: 15 (D).
 prominent part in the overthrow of Sisera's army given Exod. 15: 20 f. (E).
 to "Deborah, a prophetess;" and the description of the Judg. 4: 4 ff.
 work of Balaam, the prophet. Numb., chaps. 22-24 (J and E).

1. Note the fact that all these passages are in narratives that received their literary form from the hands of prophetic editors later than this period, and consider, in view of this fact, whether the term "prophet" in each case is properly applied to the individual in question.

2. Upon the basis of these statements, consider how comparatively inactive the prophetic function still is at this time.

3. Consider, further, the fact that in this period, Israel, like other nations, was accustomed to resort to wizards, sorcerers, necromancers, for information concerning the will of the deity, and that these classes of wonder-workers occupied a large place in the thought and life of the people.

§40. **Constructive Work on the Principal Religious Ideas**, prophetic or otherwise, during this period of patriarchs and judges. From the various sources cited—viz., (1) contemporaneous literature (§§ 27, 28), (2) later literature (§§ 29-31), (3) monumental literature (§§ 32-34), (4) religious institutions as they stood in these periods (§§ 35, 36), (5) the great characters and events, as distinguished from the history of them prepared in later times (§§ 37, 38)—let us endeavor to formulate the *religious ideas* as they were entertained in those days:

1. *As relating to God and the supernatural world.*—(a) What, for example, was the opinion held among the people at large concerning Jehovah? What are some of the explanations of the origin of the word *Jehovah*? What conception of the Deity is involved in each of these explanations? What other names of the Deity were employed in this period? Is there evidence that any effort was being made by certain leaders to introduce a conception of the Deity quite different from that held by the mass of the people? What attributes of God are receiving special emphasis at this time? Are there in the contemporaneous literature references to Jehovah as the God of creation? (b) Do the people of the times believe in the existence and manifestation of

angels? If so, what relation do these angels sustain to God? Are there other superhuman beings who have power over human life and fortune? (c) What is the opinion of the times (that is, of the leaders as well as the masses) concerning spirits? Were these spirits always evil? Was there any connection between these spirits and the spirits of dead ancestors? What common methods of sorcery, witchcraft, and necromancy were employed among the people? What attitude toward all this was assumed by the later writers? What evidence is there that in the period itself these practices were discountenanced?

2. *As relating to man.*—(a) What may be regarded as the substantial consensus of this period as to the origin of man, his relation to the Deity, his relation to the animal world, his future place in the world-economy? (b) What conceptions of sin and guilt exist at this time, and in what relationship do these conceptions stand to the idea of God commonly entertained? Define *sin*, as the people understood it; and the relationship of guilt to sin. (c) In what way was atonement made for sin? Was it really in any proper sense atonement? (d) What was their conception of the future world? In what sense was death understood to be related to sin, and sin to death? How did the belief in the return of the spirits of the dead bear upon all this?

3. *As relating to Israel's future.*—(a) Was Israel yet a nation? Were there any really national conceptions? Had reference been made to the coming "day of Jehovah"? (b) How did the anticipation and realization of possessing the Holy Land prepare the way for ideas of Israel's future? (c) Is there yet any doctrine of the future of the outside nations, *i. e.*, the heathen? (d) Has there been any certain reference to a messianic king, or to a royal order? (e) Accepting the early origin of the substance of Deut., chap. 18, what steps have been taken toward the establishment of the prophetic order, and what is the logical connection of this order with the practices of witchcraft, etc., for which it was to be a substitute?

4. *As relating to ethical standards and worship.*—(a) What is a reasonable statement describing the standard of morality prevalent in those days? Was it the same in general for individuals and for the nation? Or can there be detected a difference? (b) To what extent, if at all, had emphasis been placed on the idea of personal and national righteousness? Was there such a thing as *faith* in those days? If so, faith in what, or in whom? Define the words "faith" and "righteousness," as they seem to be used. (c) What conception do the people have concerning a so-called covenant-relationship between them

and Jehovah? What did this call for on their part? or his? (*d*) Is the routine of worship in this period simple or complicated? pure or corrupt? What, briefly, were the principal factors at the beginning of the period? What new elements have crept in during the period? Have these debased or elevated the older form? Was there any good derived from contact with these new elements? If so, what? If not, how may we explain the divine providence in bringing the older form into touch with the new?



JEREMIAH.—MICHELANGELO.